3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 8 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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At Mayurbhanj

684 184 [579] Our enquiries at Mayurbhanj revealed the existence of this institution, the only difference being that no general unrest was reported within recent memory attending the execution of the tribal punishment, so as to endanger the peace of the land.

692 623 634 684 Here also the parties adduce evidence before the *Panchayet*, and more serious cases are referred to the inter-village council and thence, if necessary, to the Supreme Court during the tribal hunt or the parliament at *Mòkòrbasi*.

684 783 [346] The special feature of the Mayurbhanj programme includes installation of a *càndàl* (a temple-like structure made of *Sal* wood) in which straw or mud images of the delinquents are placed, whereas their clothes are hung outside. Then amidst music and beat of drums the ceremony of penance is performed.

Restoration to the Tribal fold

The men who are thus excommunicated are prohibited from any social intercourse with the others as dining and getting their children married. Thus harassed by the villagers, the boycotted persons sometimes leave the village to save themselves and their progeny from ignominy. The position of those who were outcasted for having sexual connexion with people of other races is the worst, for they are

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796 married quickly. For propitiation, she needs a
[782] brown hen (*Herak' Sim*); and if a goat is sacrificed in her honour, it must be a red she-goat.

796 In course of our investigations at Mayurbhanj,
798 we were shown stones in the *Jabèrthan* (Holy Grove)
• 346 which were supposed to represent these deities. During all public festivals, huts are raised to worship them suitably. It was stated that in Mayurbhanj three huts are raised; one to house "Jahèr era," "Maraṅ Buru" and "Mòṅrèṅko," a second for "Gosane era," and the third for another village deity, "Mañjhi Haṛam." But there are instances when a fourth one is insisted on by younger folk, to honour the younger brother of Mañjhi, called "Hudiñ Mañjhi Haṛam." In our references to the
[184] practice in the Santal Parganas (e.g. *Baha*, Santal Sal-blossom festival) we have seen that only "Jahèr era," "Gosane era," "Maraṅ Buru," and "Mòṅrèṅko" have huts for them in the Holy Grove. Mañjhi has his place no doubt, but he is worshipped at the *Mañjhithan*, a separate shrine in the village.

796 As a matter of fact Mañjhi Boṅga may be
[775] supposed to represent the spirits of dead Mañjhis (village Headman). But he is only second to another dignitary, "Pargana," who has power over witches.
[184] Both of these are village-deities, although they may not find a place in the *Jabèrthans* of Mayurbhanj Santals.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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CHAPTER II

Material Culture of the Santal.

The Village : The Santal villages with their houses on both sides of the street are situated on the plains. These villages are not well fortified. In each village only one unpaved avenue can be found, the width of which is about twenty five to thirty feet and the length is equal to the length of the village. There are tall trees at intervals on both sides of the avenue which make the path shady. In a big village generally twenty to thirty houses can be seen and in a small village there are only ten to twelve houses. In each village a Majhisthan is built, where Kulidrupe[1] Panchayat) takes place and taxes are collected by the head-man of the village, and there the Manjhi Haram (head-man) worships the Pilchu Haram and Pilchu Burhi. In almost every village a Jahersthan can be found which is nothing but a cluster of Sal (Shorea robusta) trees where the Santals worship their village deities. The water supply of the village is derived from a streamlet which runs nearby. The Santal villages are very neat and clean and all the villagers take particular care to keep it so, and scavenging is done by the pigs and dogs which help in keeping the village neat. As soon as the houses have all been erected and the village established, some trees such as mango, jack-fruit etc. are planted ; the Satals[2] have a belief that these trees bring prosperity. The Headman's house is generally built more or less in the centre of the village and close to the Majhisthan. The villages are generally known by their place names as Sunderpahari, Chandna, etc.

361 [363] 344 347 651 622 778 312 364 231 245 622 342 103

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[1 Erratum: i.e., kulidrup. 2 Erratum: i.e., Santal. -- Analyst]

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[facing p. 14]

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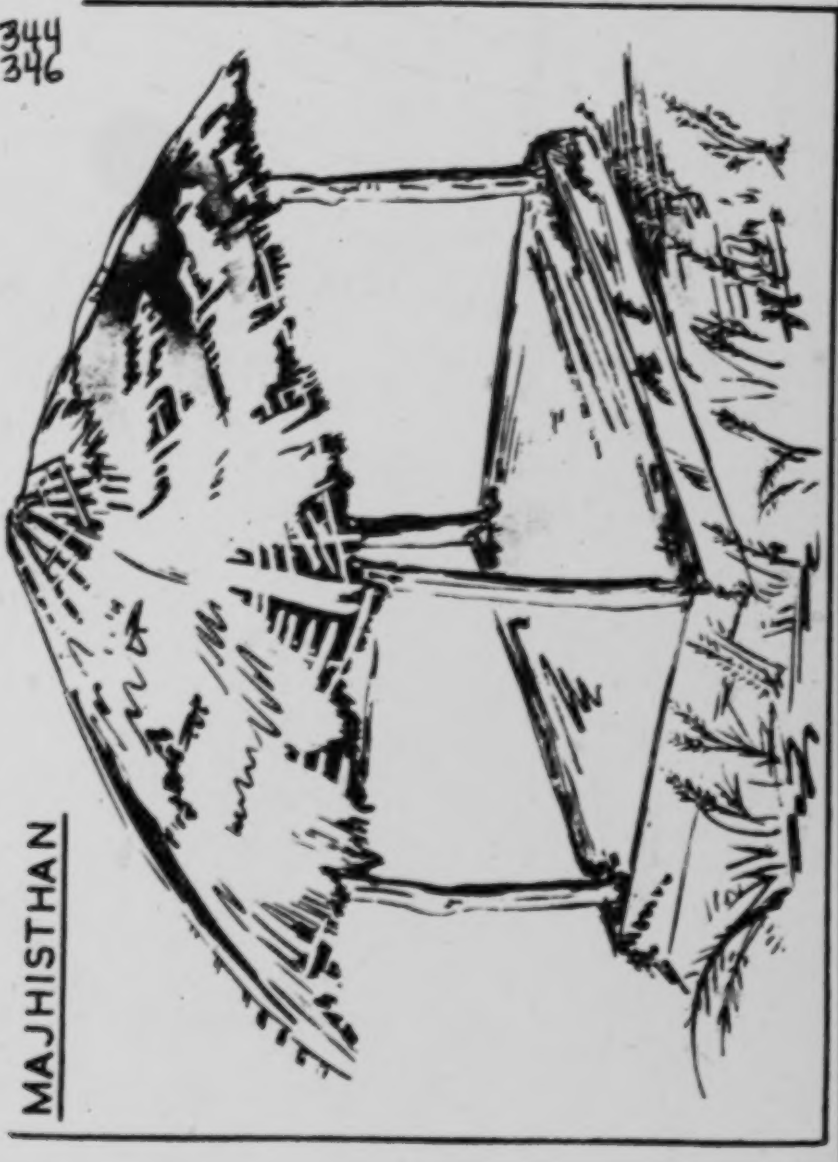

MAJHISTHAN

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361 787 The Santals observe certain omens before selecting the site for the village. Below are mentioned a few which are mainly based on what an old Santal guru known as 'Kolean guru' related to the late Rev. L. O. Skrefsurd about ninety years ago.

[825] About half a dozen Santals go inside a forest with a leader to select a site for their village. If they see any of three kinds of quails (a genus of gallinaceous birds to which the domestic fowl belongs) flying over there they say :

"Some day in the future a village founded here will be deserted".

[825] But if they see these birds hatching their eggs or if they come across a tiger on their way or see marks of its paws on the ground they say :

"Some day in the future a village founded here will thrive and become prosperous and we can stay here contentedly".

361 In selecting the site for the village, the Santals are very particular about the following things :—

The ground should not be damp and there should be enough good highland for fields and homestead. There should be enough land for cultivation and water should be readily available.

[344] [346] [778] In a Santal village two things are very important, one is the Mahajhisthan, the place made for the spirit of the original headman, and the other is the Jahersthan, the scared grove where the Santals worship the Bongas.

344 346 **The Majhisthan :** The Majhisthan or raised platform is an important place for the Santals. They build this place generally, in the centre of the village, near the

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Manjhi Haram's (headman) house. On it taxes are collected by the Manjhi Haram and legal disputes are settled. There is no fixed size for the Majhisthan. It is found that the Santals, in different villages make Majhisthans of different dimensions. In a village there was a Majhisthan ten feet long, eight feet broad and two and half feet in height while in another was one five feet long, four feet broad and one foot high. It consists of a raised mud mound over which a neatly thatched roof is constructed. The roof is supported by five upright wooden posts in the four corners of the Majhisthan and one in the centre. At the base of the centre post is stuck a small stone or wooden lump (sometimes shaped as a human head) daubed with vermilion. From the roof an earthen pot is suspended containing water brought from the Jahirsthan for the spirits to drink and beside it hangs a peacock's head. The floor of the Majhisthan is plastered with mud and cowdung.

The Jahirsthan (Sacred Grove): The Jahirsthan is a place where religious ceremonies of the village are performed by the Santals. It is situated at the end of the village and it must be within the boundary of the village. A cluster of sal trees about twenty to twenty-five in number is always required. Among these trees three are essential, and at the foot of each of these three trees a stone is put representing the deities, Jaherera, Turukomonrako, Marang-Buru. The fourth one is an Ashan tree which grows near these three sal trees and at the foot of this tree a stone representing the deity Pargana-bonga is kept. The fifth and the last one is a Mowa tree, which stands a little apart, and at the foot of this tree, a stone is placed to represent

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783 **Jam Jati**: By performing this ceremony an outcasted Santal is accepted back into society. It is done in the following way :—

When both the aggrieved parties are ready to provide the necessary money for the performance of this ceremony they inform the Manjhiharam who again informs the Parganait of the Bunglow, and the latter makes it known to the Parganaits of other neighbouring bunglows. Then a day is fixed for the performance of this ceremony and the person who is to be re-admitted prepares a big feast. Then the outcasted man and woman go out to the end of the village street with a twisted cloth round their necks, and water in a lota. To the Parganaits and the village chiefs the offenders acknowledge their offence and pray to them, "Have pity on us". The Parganaits and the chiefs say "Since you have acknowledged your offence we do now take and carry all that for you". Then the outcasts take a little water and wash their mouths with it and pass the lota round to all the leading men, who do the same. After this they enter the village and the courtyard of the outcasts who personally wash the feet of the leaders of the people. All then sit down in rows to eat, leaf plates being put before them. On the leaf-plates of the parganaits Rs. 10 is put, on the Desmanjhis' plates Rs. 5 and on those of the headmen also Rs. 5.

963 795 **Disposal of the Dead**: When a person is dying they generally keep the doors open, as the Santals prefer to have the spirit of the departed wandering about outside the house than taking a permanent abode inside. This • 346 is probably one of the reasons why the Manjhisthan is 775 built, as it affords a residence to the manes of the

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346 • 775

departed ; although this Manjhisthan is build before the house of the headman of a village yet it seems that the spirits of all deceased villagers are commonly considered to congregate there.

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After death, the body is carried on a bedstead by the relatives and villagers who cover the body with a new shroud. When they reach a cross road some [782] parched rice and cotton seeds are scattered about as a charm against the malignant spirits that might throw obstacles in the way. On that cross road they wait for an hour and the women and relations lament over the deceased. They carry the dead body to the bank of a streamlet nearby. The clothes, brass utensils and weapons of the departed are brought with the dead body. These things are sold at half price near the [432] pyre. The pyre is prepared with the wood which is [768] brought from the jungle nearby. Before placing the dead body on the pyre, the heir of the deceased with his face averted and walking backwards inserts a piece of grass between the lips of the dead man and places a silver coin in his hand. The dead body with the bedstead is placed on the funeral pyre and a small chip is taken off the collar-bone and deposited in a new pot and the heir then applies fire to the dead body by placing a piece of burning wood on the face of the corpse. Before setting fire to the body it is covered with a branch and four pieces of wood are put on it. A fowl is taken round the pyre thrice and is finally nailed to the south-west corner pole. After the heir has placed a piece of burning wood on the dead man's face, all the relatives and others present throw a log on the pyre and proceed to kindle it. The people sit at a

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courtyard there is an elevated place, square, or rectangular, the size generally being 1½'×1½'×1'. It is made of earth, and a *Tulsi* (Ocymum Sanctum L.) plant is planted in the centre of the mound over which a shed is erected. The shed is so large that it can easily accommodate 10 to 12 persons. The shed is erected by the unmarried disciples, married ones have nothing to do with the erection of the shed. The posts of this shed are of sal wood. In the centre of the shed a hen's egg and a chir sakom (a thin kind of iron wristlet or arm ornament) are kept for preventing witches from molesting them. The course lasts for four months. A woman cannot be an *ojha*. The first act of the *ojha* is what is called *Akhra rara* which means performing the opening ceremony, to ensure that all may go well and without any hindrance. The first evening the disciples bring along with them some *sindur* which is given to the *guru*. In five different places in the courtyard the *ojha* makes vermilion marks in the name of the following five different *bongas* :—

(1) Kamru guru (the reputed first teacher of *ojha* science to the Santals),

(2) Sin *Bonga* (the sun),

(3) Kali mai (the goddess Durga),[1]

(4) Dibi mai (the goddess Durga),

(5) Ganga mai (the Ganges goddess).

The following invocation is offered to all of them by him after changing the names of the *Bongas* :

"Nokoe, Kamru guru (or, as the case may be, Serma Sin Thakur, etc.) amintikawam kana; nokoe cela korako

1 [Erratum: this should read "(the goddess Kali)."
Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. x - Analyst]